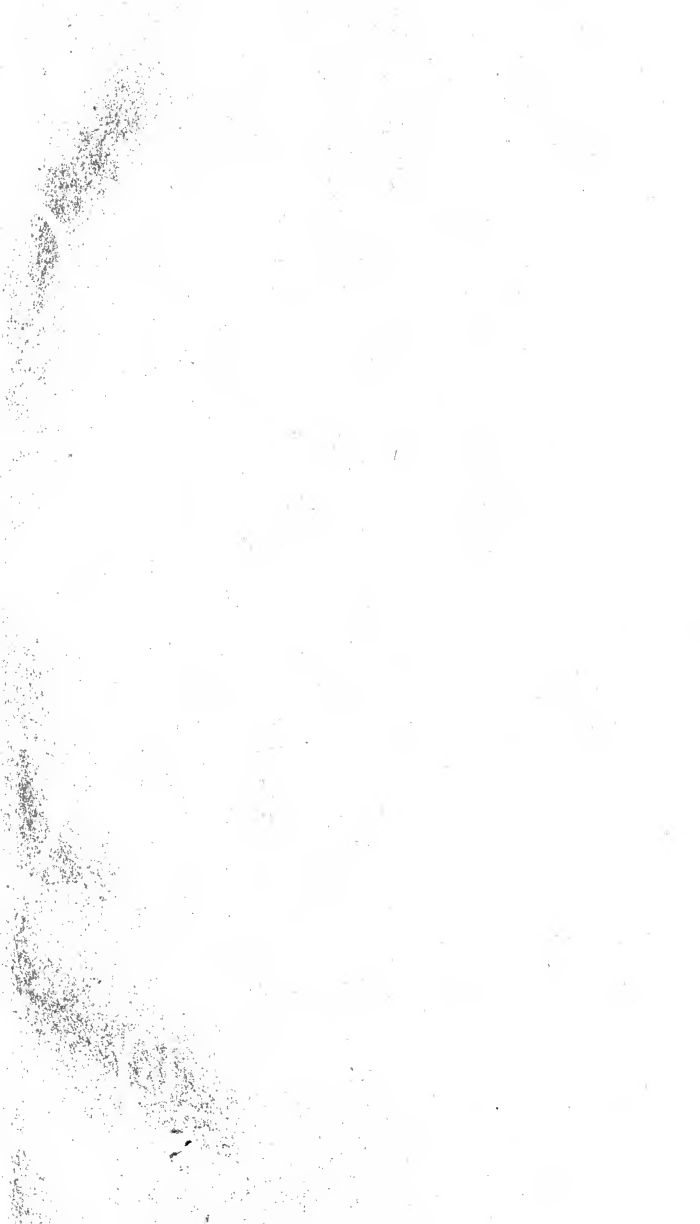


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POEMS

BY

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.



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268
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181
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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
CHRISTINE	1
THE BRIDE OF DATTENBURG	17
THE WINNOWER	28
THE CITY OF THE HEART	31
SOME THINGS LOVE ME	35
OLIVIA	38
INEZ	42
"LADY WITH THE DUSKY TRESSES"	46
TO THE MASTER BARDS	48
A SHADOW	49
A LEAF FROM THE PAST	51
WHY NOT WE	54
ARISE	56
THE MAID OF THE MORNING	58
THE WINDY NIGHT	62
"MOURN NOT, SAD POET"	65
THE WATER	66

	PAGE
A MORNING, BUT NO SUN	68
TO WORDSWORTH	70
THE SUMMER SHOWER	71
LABOR	73
SUNLIGHT ON THE THRESHOLD	76
THE RAINY DAY	80
THE SWISS STREET SINGER	82
THE DEPARTURE	85
THE TWINS	87
EVENING	90
AUTUMN'S SIGHING	93
THE LAND OF OBLIVION	96
INDIAN SUMMER	98
THE DISTANT MART	99
THE SCULPTOR'S LAST HOUR	102
A DIRGE FOR A DEAD BIRD	109
BELLS	111
COME THOU, MY BRIDE	114
A HYMN TO THE NIGHT	116
WINTER	118
THE BARDS	122



P O E M S.

CHRISTINE.

*Supposed to be related by a young sculptor on the hill-side,
between Florence and Fesolè.*

COME my friend, and in the silence and the shadow
 wrapt apart,
I will loose the golden claspings of this sacred tome—the
 heart.

By the bole of yonder cypress, under branches spread
 like eaves,
We will sit where wavering sunshine weaves a romance
 in the leaves.

There by gentle airs of story shall our dreaming minds
 be swayed,

And our spirits hang vibrating like the sunshine with
the shade.

Thou shalt sit, and leaning o'er me, calmly look into my
heart,

Look as Fesolé above us looketh on Val d'Arno's mart.

Shalt behold how Love's fair river down the golden city
goes,

As the silent silver Arno through the streets of Florence
flows.

I was standing o'er the marble, in the twilight falling
gray,

All my hopes and all my courage wasting from me like
the day :

There I leaned across the statue, heaving many a sigh
and groan,

For I deemed the world as heartless, aye, as heartless
as the stone !

Nay, I well nigh thought the marble was a portion of
my pain,

For it seemed a frozen sorrow just without my burning
brain !

Then a cold and death-like stupor slowly crept along my
frame,

While my life seemed passing outward, like a pale re-
luctant flame.

Then my weary soul went from me, and it walked the
world alone,

O'er a wide and brazen desert, in a hot and brazen
zone !

There it walked and trailed its pinions, slowly trailed
them in the sands,

With its hopeless eyes fixed blindly, with its hopeless
folded hands.

And there came no morn, — no evening with its gentle
stars and moon,

But the sun amid the heavens made a broad unbroken
noon.



And anon far reaching westward, with its weight of
burning air,
Lay an old and desolate ocean with a dead and glassy
stare !

There my spirit wandered gazing, for the goal no time
might reach,
With its weary feet unsandaled on the hard and heated
beach !

This it is to feel uncared for, like a useless wayside
stone,
This it is to walk in spirit through the desolate world
alone !

Still I leaned across the marble, and a hand was on my
arm,
And my soul came back unto me as 't were summoned
by a charm.

While a voice in gentlest whisper, breathed my name
into my ear,

“ Ah, Andrea, why this silence, why this shadow and
this tear ? ”

Then I felt that I had wronged her, though I knew not
that before ;

I had feared that she would scorn me if I told the love
I bore.

I had seen her, spoken to her, only twice or thrice per-
chance ;

And her mien was fine and stately though all heaven
was in her glance,

She had praised my humble labors, the conception and
the art, —

She had said a thing of beauty nestled ever to her heart.

And I thought one pleasant morning when our eyes to-
gether met,

That her orbs in dewey splendor dropt beneath their
fringe of jet.

Though her form and air were noble, yet a simple dress
she wore,

Like yon maiden by the cypress which the vines are
weeping o'er.

And she came all unattended, — her protection in her
mien ;

And with somewhat of reluctance bade me call her name
Christine.

Then that name became a music, and my dreams went
to the time,

And my brain all day made verses, and her beauty filled
the rhyme.

Then I knew not that she loved me, but I felt it now the
more ;

For her hand was laid upon me, and her eyes were brim-
ming o'er.

Down the deepest tides of feeling how her holy presence
slid,

With a light divine as Dian's on Endymion's dreamy
lid.

Oh, she looked into my spirit, as the stars look in the
stream,

Or as azure eyes of angels calm the trouble of a dream.

Then I told my love unto her, and her sighs came deep
and long —

So yon peasant plays the measure while the other leads
the song.

Then with tender words we parted, only as true lovers
can ;

I for that deep love she bore me was a braver, better
man.

I had lived unloved of any, only loving Art before ;

Now I thought all things did love, and I loved all things
the more.

I had lived accursed of Fortune, lived in penury worse
than pain ;

But when all the heaven was blackest down it burst in
golden rain.

I was summoned to the palace, to the chamber of the
Duke,

And I felt those hopes within me which no darkness
could rebuke.

Down he kindly came to meet me, but I thought the
golden throne,

Upon which my love had raised me, was not lower than
his own.

Then he grasped my hand right warmly, and I gave as
warm return,

For I felt a noble nature in my very fingers burn !

And I would not bow below him if I could not rise
above,

For I wore within my bosom all the majesty of Love !

Then said he, " Your fame has reached me, and I fain
would test your skill,

Carve me something, Signor, follow the free fancy of
your will.

Carve me something, an Apollo, or a Dian with her
hounds ;

Or Adonis, dying, watching the young life flow from his
wounds ; —

Or the dreamy-lidded Psyché, with her Cupid on her
knee ;

Or the flying fretted Daphne, taking refuge in the tree.

Nay, I would not dictate, Signor, I would trust your taste
and skill ;

In the ancient armored chamber you may carve me
what you will."

Then I thanked him as he left me — and I walked the
armored hall —

Even I, so late neglected walked within the palace wall !

There were many suits of armor, some with battered
breasts and casques ;

And I thought the ancestral phantoms smiled upon me
from their masks.

And my steps were all elastic with an energy divine !
Never in those breasts of iron beat a heart so proud as
mine !

There for days I walked the chamber with a spirit all
inflamed,
And I thought o'er all the subjects which the generous
Duke had named ;

Thought of those, and thought of others, slowly thought
them o'er and o'er,
Till my stormy brain went throbbing like the billows on
the shore.

In despair I left the palace, sought my humble room
again,
There my gentle Christine met me, and she smiled away
my pain.

“ Courage ! ” said she, and my courage leapt within me
with a shock !
As of old when spake the prophet, leapt the waters
from the rock !

Who shall say that love is idle, or a weight upon the
mind ?

Nay, the soul which dares to scorn it, hath in idle dust
reclined.

I went back and in the chamber piled the shapeless
Adam-earth ;

Piled it carelessly, not knowing to what form it might
give birth.

There I leaned and dreamed above it, till the day went
down the west,

And the darkness came unto me like an old familiar
guest.

But I started, for a rustle swept across the solemn
gloom !

And with light, like morn's horizon, gleamed the far
end of the room !

Then a heavy sea of curtain, in a tempest rolled away !
Blessed Virgin ! how I trembled ! but it was not with
dismay.

And my eyes grew large and larger, as I looked with
lips apart ;

All my senses drank in beauty, till it overflowed my
heart.

There it stood a living statue, with its loosened locks of
brown,

In an attitude angelic, with the folded hands dropt
down.

But I could not see the features, for a veil was hanging
there,

Yet so thin that o'er the forehead I could trace the shade
of hair.

Then the veil became a trouble, and I wished that it
were gone,

And I spoke, 't was but a whisper, " let thy features on
me dawn ! "

Then the heavy sea of drapery stormed again across
my sight,

And it left me wrapt in darkness, and it left me wrapt
in night.

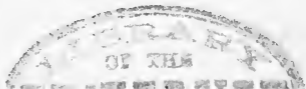
But for days where'er I turned me, still that blessed form
was there,
As one looketh to the sunlight then beholds it every-
where.

Then for days and days I labored with a soul in courage
mailed ;
And I wrought the nameless statue ; but alas, the face
was veiled !

I had tried all forms of feature — every face of classic
art,
Still the veil was there — I felt it in my brain and in my
heart !

Then again I left the palace, and again I met Christine,
And she trembled as I told her of the vision I had seen.

And she sighed “ Ah, dear Andrea,” while she clung
unto my breast,



“What if this should prove a phantom, something fearful, all unblest ?

Something which shall pass between us !” and she clasped me with her arm :

“Nay,” I answered, “love, I’ll test it with a most angelic charm !

Let me gaze upon thy features, love, and fear not for the rest,

These shall exorcise the spirit if it be a thing unblest !”

Then I hurried to the statue, where so often I had failed,
And I made the face of Christine, and it stood no longer veiled !

With a flush upon my forehead, then I called the Duke
— he came,

And in rustling silks beside him walked his tall and stately dame.

And they looked upon the statue, then on me with stern surprise ;

Then they looked upon each other with a wonder in their eyes!

“What is this?” spoke out the Duchess with her gaze fixed on the Duke;

“What is this?” and me he questioned in a tone of sharp rebuke.

Like a miserable echo, I the question asked again —
And he said, “it is our daughter! your presumption for your pain!”

But now bursting from the curtain in her jeweled dress complete,
Swept a maiden in her beauty, and she dropt before his feet —

And she cried, “my father — mother, cast aside that frowning mien!

And forgive my own Andrea, and forgive your child Christine!

Oh forgive us ! for believe me, all the fault was mine
alone !”

And they granted her petition, and they blest us as their
own !

THE BRIDE OF DATTENBURG.



DARK fell the winter's stormy night
On Dattenburg's rude castled height,
Through gloomy halls and crumbling door,
The wild winds swept with sullen roar ;
And on the dusky ruin beat
The arrowy showers of rain and sleet ;
Till every broken arch and post
Gleamed through the darkness like a ghost !
But out athwart the midnight air
A taper shot its starry glare. —
Perchance some bride had bade it burn
To safely guide her lord's return,
Or maid, perchance, had placed the light
A beacon for her wandering knight.

Or was it but a spectral ray
To lead the traveler astray ?
But who at that dread hour and late
Stood beating at the ruined gate,
While, at his side, with dripping mane,
A steed contended with the rein;
And ran along the castle gray,
The echoes of the charger's neigh ?
The stately form in splendor drest,
From arméd heel to pluméd crest,
Spoke an illustrious lord of Rhine
Fresh from the fields of Palestine ;
Who, blinded by the tempest's wrath,
Had wandered from his mountain path,
Until, with joy, he saw afar
The radiance of that friendly star.
And he, in that dread hour and late,
Stood beating at the ruined gate.

“ Ho ! Warder ! ho ! ” again he cried
“ Ho ! Warder ! ho ! ” the walls replied !
“ What ho ! a traveler calls for aid ! ”
Still echo only answer made.

Then murmured he, " this wall unknown
Is but some ruin old and lone,
Deserted by its lord to be
A place for ghostly revelry !
For never yet a lord of Rhine
Refused his shelter — or his wine !
Then be this place the demon's haunt,
My soul can bid them all avaunt,
Or fearless be the Phantom's guest —
To night within these halls I rest ! "

He gave his steed a sheltered stall,
And groped his way along the wall ;
Then through the crumbling portal passed,
Where writhed and moaned and shrieked the blast.
Fit minstrelsy in such an hour
To welcome knight to haunted bower.
Though all was utter darkness there,
He passed along from hall to stair,
Till gleaming from a distant room,
A ray was painted on the gloom.

He strode along unto the flame,
And gained the door from whence it came —
His foot was on the oaken sill,
A moment and his heart was still !
At thought of fear his blood upsprung !
The door on creaking hinges swung, —
And forth he stepped within the light
And bowed, as well became a knight.
Before him stood in snowy dress;
A maid of lustrous loveliness.
And when excuse the knight essayed,
Her large eyes dropped beneath their shade,
As night birds from the glowing day,
Drop in the dusky pines away.
And thus she stood before the guest,
With mien that suits a maiden best.
Then spake the knight with humble air —
“ Forgive the rudeness, lady fair ;
Before thee stands a lord of Rhine,
Late from the fields of Palestine.
The night is dark — the blast is cold,
And baffled on the midnight wold,

Through various paths I turned astray ; —
Yet, surely, have not lost my way ;
For nought were all the storms to-night,
Since so much beauty greets my sight ! ”

She paid his words with dusky wine,
The generous beverage of the Rhine, —
A golden goblet handed him,
And filled it to the jewelled brim ; —
On her so steady was his glance,
And she so steady looked askance,
That ere they thought the goblet filled,
A portion on the floor was spilled !
And ere his lips had touched the edge,
He bowed to her with courteous pledge ;
Then long and deep he breathless quaffed,
And passionately praised the draught.
Such wine upon his native shore,
Was never quaffed by knight before ;
For well he knew the purple wave,
Took virtue from the hand that gave !
As oft the silver flagon rained
Upon the cup, as oft he drained ;

At every draught more lovely grew,
The silent maiden to his view ;
Till fired with love beyond command,
He proffered her his heart and hand !

As from her clasp the flagon fell,
The maiden gazed upon him well !
And as her bosom heaved a sigh,
Somewhat of love was in her eye,
And on her lip a tender smile —
Yet never word she spake the while !
But now she stepped aside and took
A gold harp from its dusky nook ;
And softly as the fall of snow,
Or softly as the night flowers blow ;
Or as the wavering rose leaves fall,
From Autumn's fading coronal,
As soft the fingers of the maid
Among the golden harp-strings played.
So sweet the gentle cadence swelled,
The knight entranced his posture held ;
And as his soul drank eagerly
Those low, sad notes of melody,

With sweet, unearthly grief imbued,
He sighed, he wept and bowed subdued !
And as she swept the chords along,
Thus swelled the melancholy song. —

SONG.

“ Ah, woe is me ! Ah, woe is me !
'T was in the solemn midnight hour,
Through winter winds and freezing shower,
A knight came to a lady's bower ;

Ah, woe is me !

The last bud on the blasted tree

Was she,

Ah me !

“ Ah, woe is me ! Ah, woe is me !
He claimed her hospitality,
And drank the purple wine so free,
And pledged to her right courteously ;

Ah, woe is me !

The last bud on the blasted tree

Was she,

Ah me !

“ Ah, woe is me ! Ah, woe is me !

A noble baron of the Rhine,
He asked her hand when flushed with wine,
And in her heart she said, ‘ I ’ m thine ! ’

Ah, woe is me !

The last bud on the blasted tree

Was she,

Ah me ! ”

Now as the cadence softly died,
The maiden rose and stepped aside, —
Before the pictures of a knight,
And dame in jewelled dress bedight,
Awhile she stood. — Then from the wall
Took down a withered coronal,
And placed it on her lover’s head ;
Then solemnly the way she led
Though many an echoing corridor, —
And now they walked the chapel floor !
A flood of light around them hung
From many a waxen taper flung ;
Green branches waved around the wall,
As for some holy festival !

Now shadow-like a stately pair
Walked up the aisle with solemn air !
The bridegroom gazed on them aghast,
While to a statued tomb they passed ! —
There were the pictured knight and dame
Which late he saw ! — the very same !
And grimly stretched along the tomb,
There lay a mitred form of gloom ; —
The old knight waved his shadowy hand :
Obedient to the stern command,
Sad strains of music swelled around,
Like organ tones from under ground !
The statue with his mitred crest
Rose slowly from his place of rest,
And with a loud, unearthly tread,
The way unto the altar led !
While, statue-like, the aged pair
Gazed on the youth with stony stare,
Out spake the prelate with a tone,
That seemed the distant thunder's moan,
And on the young knight's soul it fell
As cold as icy manacle !

“Speak ! Kurd von Stein ! tak’st thou for bride,
The maiden standing at thy side ?
Speak ! Kurd von Stein ! ” The trembling knight
No word could answer for affright !
Again he heard the question swell,
Like summons from a smothered cell —
And once again with fiercer power,
“Speak ! Kurd von Stein ! — ” The convent tower
Now told abroad the morning hour !
And with it came a rush of wind,
And not a trace was left behind
Of bishop, maid, or aged pair !
They passed like leaves on autumn air !
The young knight giddy swooned away ;
And when he woke, the golden day
Was streaming o’er him where he lay !

Down from the altar then he stepped,
Where he the troubled hour had slept ;
And passing through the ruined aisle, —
The wild birds fluttered out the while, —
He saw the mitred statue grim,
Lay stretched with rusty form and limb,

So overgrown with ivies green,
The stately form could scarce be seen.
But now he heard his charger's neigh —
Now, thoughtfully, he rode away !

THE WINNOWER.



SINGS a maiden by a river,
Sings and sighs alternately ;
In my heart shall flow forever,
Like a stream, her melody.
'Midst her hair of flaxen hue
Tend'rest buds and blossoms teem ;
And her beauty glows as through
Hazy splendors of a dream.
Like her melody's rich bars —
Or a golden flood of stars, —
Rustling like a summer rain,
Through her fingers falls the grain,
Swells her voice in such sweet measure,
I must join for very pleasure ;

But my lay shall be of her,
Bright and lovely Winnower !

When her song to laughter merges,
 Melts the music of her tongue,
Like the voice of mimic surges
 Over golden pebbles flung.
From her hands the grainless chaff
 On the light wind dances free ;
But a sigh will check her laugh, —
 “ So much worthlessness, ah me,
Mingles with the good ! ” saith she ;
Yet the grain is fair to see.
Laughter, like some sweet surprise,
Lights again her dewy eyes,
And her song hath drowned her sighs ;
Therefore will I sing of her,
Bright and lovely Winnower !

Down beside as fair a river
 Sings the maiden Poesy,
In my heart shall flow forever
 Her undying melody.

Through her rosy fingers fall
 Golden grain of richest thought ;
But the grainless chaff is all
 By the scatt'ring breezes caught : —
“ So much worthlessness, ah me,
 Mingles with the good ! ” saith she.
Yet the grain is bright to see,
Therefore laughs she merrily !
Laughs and sings in such sweet measure,
I must join for very pleasure —
While my heart keeps time with her,
I will praise the Winnower !

THE CITY OF THE HEART.



THE heart is a city teeming with life —
Through all its gay avenues, rife
 With gladness
 And innocent madness,
Bright beings are passing along,
Too fleeting and fair for the eye to behold,
 While something of Paradise sweetens their song,
They are gliding away with their wild gushing ditty,
 Out of the city,
Out of the beautiful gates of gold !
 Through gates that are ringing
 While to and fro swinging,
Swinging and ringing ceaselessly,
Like delicate hands that are clapped in glee,
Beautiful hands of infancy !

The heart is a city — and gay are the feet
That dance along
To the joyous beat
Of the timbrel that giveth a pulse to song.
Bright creatures enwreathed
With flowers and mirth,
Fair maidens bequeathed
With the glory of earth,
Sweep through the long street, and singing await,
A moment await at the wonderful gate ;
Every second of time there comes to depart
Some form that no more shall revisit the heart !
They are gliding away and breathing farewell —
How swiftly they pass
Through the gates of brass,
Through gates that are ringing
While to and fro swinging,
And making deep sounds, like the half-stifled swell
Of the far away ring of a gay marriage bell !

The heart is a city with splendor bedight,
Where tread martial hosts arrayed for the fight,

Under banner-hung arches,

To war-kindling marches,

To the fife and the rattle

Of drums, with gay colors unfurled,

On, eager for battle,

To smite their bright spears on the spears of the world !

Through noontime, through midnight, list, and thou'lt
hear

The gates swing in front, then clang in the rear.

Like a bright river flowing,

The war host is going,

And, like that river,

Returning, ah never !

Through daylight and darkness low thunder is heard

From the city that flings

Her iron wrought wings,

Flapping the air like the wings of a bird !

The heart is a city — how sadly and slow,

To and fro,

Covered with rust, the solemn gates go !

With meek folded palms,

With heads bending lowly,
Strange beings pass slowly,
Through the dull avenues chanting their psalms ;
Sighing and mourning they follow the dead
Out of the gates that fall heavy as lead —
Passing, how sadly, with echoless tread,

The last one is fled!

No more to be opened, the gates softly close,
And shut in a stranger who loves the repose ;
With no sigh for the past, with countenance of pity
He spreads his black flag o'er the desolate city !

SOME THINGS LOVE ME.



ALL within and all without me

 Feel a melancholy thrill ;

And the darkness hangs about me,

 Oh, how still !

To my feet, the river glideth

 Through the shadow, sullen, dark ;

On the stream the white moon rideth,

 Like a barque —

And the linden leans above me,

 Till I think some things there be

In this dreary world that love me,

 Even me !

Gentle flowers are springing near me,

 Shedding sweetest breath around ;

Countless voices rise, to cheer me,
From the ground ;
And the lone bird comes — I hear it
In the tall and windy pine
Pour the sadness of its spirit
Into mine ;
There it swings and sings above me,
Till I think some things there be
In this dreary world that love me,
Even me !

Now the moon hath floated to me,
On the stream I see it sway,
Swinging, boat-like, as 't would woo me
Far away —
And the stars bend from the azure,
I could reach them where I lie,
And they whisper all the pleasure
Of the sky.
There they hang and smile above me,
Till I think some things there be
In the very heavens that love me,
Even me !

Now when comes the tide of even,
Like a solemn river, slow,
Gentle eyes akin to heaven
On me glow —
Loving eyes that tell their story,
Speaking to my heart of hearts ;
But I sigh, “ a thing of glory
Soon departs ! ”
Yet when Mary fades above me,
I must think that there will be
One thing more in heaven to love me,
Even me !

OLIVIA .



Down where tall and saintly poplars
 Grow along a grassy lane,
Stands a mansion, old and lonely,
Gray with mould, and open only
 To the gusty wind and rain.

Round the porch long vines are trailing
 With the webs that fan the gust ;
Overgrown with honey-suckles
Is the door, whose brazen knuckles
 Hang engloved in dust and rust.

And a sleepy silver river
 Through the silent meadow flows ;

Sweeping toward the distant city,
And it seems to murmur pity
 As it seems to dream of woes.

Down beneath the aged willow,
 Down beside the garden gate,
Sat Olivia, sighing, weeping,
For her lover, lonely keeping
 Weary watch and watching late.

In the sunny days now numbered
 With the sleeping, dreamy past,
With that weeping tree above her,
Proudly spake she to her lover
 Words of scorn, to him the last.

Word of scorn, and spoken proudly,
 Not the meanest brook o'er well —
Word of scorn — say, who may bear it ?
Not the glowing, noble spirit,
 Though from angel lips it fell !

With a heart as proud as ever,
 She returned his cold adieu ; —
In his boat she saw him sitting,
Watched him toward the city flitting —
 Swiftly flitting from her view.

When beneath the distant bridges
 She beheld no more his sail,
Gazing still adown the river,
Her pale lips began to quiver,
 And her heart began to fail.

Years went by. — Beneath that willow
 Still she gazed toward the town ; —
Gazed toward the gilded steeple,
Or beheld the joyous people
 In their boats float up and down.

There she sat till reason left her,
 There she sat in her despair,
Sadly singing, sighing, grieving,

Sighing sadly, singing, weaving
Willow branches in her hair.

Down beneath the crowded bridges,
When the day was in the wane,
With gay songs and laughter hearty,
Sailed a brilliant bridal party,
Jesting, singing all amain.

But the bridegroom by his lady,
Mutely gazed upon the tide,
Till he saw the wave was laden
With the white form of a maiden! —
Saw her tresses floating wide !

Still he gazed, until her features
Gleamed amid the waters dim ;
But ere burst his cry of wonder
She sank down forever under !
Sank unseen by all but him !

I N E Z .



Down behind the hidden village, fringed around with
hazel brake,
(Like a holy hermit dreaming, half asleep and half
awake,
One who loveth the sweet quiet for the happy quiet's
sake,)
Dozing, murmuring in its visions, lay the heaven-enam-
ored lake.

And within a dell, where shadows through the brightest
days abide,
Like the silvery swimming gossamer by breezes scat-
tered wide,
Fell a shining skein of water that ran down the lake-
let's side,
As within the brain by beauty lulled, a pleasant thought
may glide.

When the sinking sun of August, growing large in the
decline,

Shot his arrows long and golden, through the maple
and the pine ;

And the russet-thrush fled singing from the alder to
the vine,

While the cat-bird in the hazel gave its melancholy
whine ;

And the little squirrel chattered, peering round the
hickory bole,

And, like a lonely meteor, gleamed along the oriole ;—
There I walked beside fair Inez, and her gentle beauty
stole

Like the scene athwart my senses, like the sunshine
through my soul.

And her fairy feet that pressed the leaves, a pleasant
music made,

And they dimpled the sweet beds of moss with blos-
soms thick inlaid : —

There I told her old romances, and with love's sweet
 woe we played,
Till fair Inez's eyes, like evening, held the dew be-
 neath their shade.

There I wove for her love ballads, such as lover only
 weaves,
Till she sighed and grieved, as only mild and loving
 maiden grieves ;
And to hide her tears she stooped to glean the violets
 from the leaves,
As of old sweet Ruth went gleaning 'mid the oriental
 sheaves.

Down we walked beside the lakelet : — gazing deep
 into her eye,
There I told her all my passion ! With a sudden blush
 and sigh,
Turning half away with look askant, she only made
 reply,
“ How deep within the water glows the happy evening
 sky ! ”

Then I asked her if she loved me, and our hands met
each in each,

And the dainty, sighing ripples seemed to listen up the
reach ;

While thus slowly with a hazel wand she wrote along
the beach,

“Love, like the sky, lies deepest ere the heart is
stirred to speech.”

Thus I gained the love of Inez — thus I won her gentle
hand ;

And our paths now lie together, as our foot-prints on
the strand ;

We have vowed to love each other in the golden morn-
ing land,

When our names from earth have vanished, like the
writing from the sand !

“LADY WITH THE DUSKY TRESSES.”

LADY with the dusky tresses,
Sunny cheek and lustrous eye,
Brightly standest thou before me,
With thy looks so pure and high ;
And thou fills't my soul with beauty,
As the morning fills the sky ; —
Therefore, lady, shine forever,
Like the morning smiling ever,
With a glory fading never !

Like a gladsome gleam of sunshine,
Thou dost glide amid thy halls,
Flushing all things into beauty
Wheresoe'er thy glory falls ; —
More than for the golden sunlight,
Some sad spirit for thee calls !

Therefore, lady, shine forever,
Like the sunlight smiling ever,
With a glory fading never !

Not the stars that gild the azure,
Speaking ever love divine,
Nor the upward looking flowers,
That like stars around us shine,
Show us half the heaven that beameth
From those gentle eyes of thine.
Therefore, lady, shine forever,
Like the sweet stars smiling ever,
With a glory fading never !

Not the solemn air of midnight,
By a rustling water stirred,
Nor the sweetest song of angels
In a golden vision heard,
Fill the soul with half the music
Of thy slightest murmured word !
Therefore, lady, sing forever,
Like the angels ceasing never,
Shedding glory round thee ever !

TO THE MASTER BARDS.



YE mighty masters of the song sublime,
Who, phantom-like, with large unwavering eyes,
Stalk down the solemn wilderness of Time,
Reading the mysteries of the future skies ;
Oh, scorn not earth because it is not heaven ;
Nor shake the dust against us from your feet,
Because we have rejected what was given !
Still let your tongues the wondrous theme repeat !
Though ye be friendless in this solitude,
Quick wingéd thoughts, from many an unborn year,
God-sent, shall feed ye with prophetic food,
Like those blest birds which fed the ancient Seër !
And Inspiration, like a wheeléd flame,
Shall bear ye upward to eternal fame !

A SHADOW.



THE river rolls with might and main,
Where never a bird is blithe,
Like a mower, the beautiful tree on the plain
Sways, swinging its shadowy scythe.
Like the river's flow
Through the autumn plain,
The river of woe
Sweeps through my brain ;
And beautiful Love sways to and fro,
Swinging a shadowy scythe !

The river drowns the swooning bank,
And the plain is a desolate sea,
And flinging its arms abroad, leafless and lank,
Leander-like labors the tree.



Like the waters flow
Over the plain,
The waters of woe
Sweep over my brain,
And laboring Love reels to and fro,
Spurning and lashing the desolate sea !

The flood subsides, the river glides
In silvery sheen right joyously,
The conquering tree on the bright plain hides
Its limbs in greenest livery.
The sea of woe
Hath left my brain,
And pleasures flow
In their channel again ;
While beautiful Love sways to and fro,
Bedecked in Hope's bright livery !

A LEAF FROM THE PAST.



With thee, dear friend, though far away,
I walk, as on some vanished day,
And all the past returns in beautiful array.

With thee I still pace to and fro
Along the airy portico,
And gaze upon the flowers and river winding slow.

And there, as in some fairy realm,
I hear the sweet birds overwhelm
The fainting air with music from the lofty elm.

And hear the wingéd winds, like bees,
Go swarming in the tufted trees,
Or dropping low way, o'erweighed with melodies.

We walk beneath the cedar's eaves,
Where statued Ceres, with her sheaves,
Stands sheltered in a bower of trailing vines and leaves.

Or strolling by the garden fence,
Drinking delight with every sense,
We watch th' encamping sun throw up his golden tents.

With thee I wander as of old,
When fall the linden's leaves of gold,
Or when old winter whitely mantles all the wold.

As when the low salt marsh was mown,
With thee I idly saunter down
Between the long white village and the towered town.

I see the sultry bridge and long,
The river where the barges throng —
The bridge and river made immortal in thy song.

In dreams like these, of calm delight,
I live again the wintry night,
When all was dark without, but all within was bright —

When she, fit bride for such as thou,
She with the quiet, queenly brow,
Read from the minstrel's page with tuneful voice and low.

Still in the crowd or quiet nook,
I hear thy tone — behold thy look —
Thou speakest with thine eyes as from a poet's book.

I listen to thy cheering word,
And sadness, like the affrighted bird,
Flies fast, and flies afar, until it is unheard.

WHY NOT WE.



Look how the blue-eyed violets
 Glance love to one another !
Their little leaves are whispering
 The vows they may not smother.
The birds are pouring passion forth,
 From every blossoming tree—
If flowers and birds talk love, lady,
 Why not we ?

The golden — flashing meadow grass
 With vernal feeling thrills,
And rivulet to rivulet,
 Discourses in the hills ;

Along the dreamy valleys sigh
The rivers to the sea —
They murmur their pure love, lady,
Why not we ?

And over all the happy earth,
Love floweth — like a river —
True love, whose glory fills the sky
Forever and forever.
The pale hearts of the silver stars
Throb, too, as mine to thee. —
All things delight in love, lady,
Why not we ?

ARISE.



I.

THE shadow of the midnight hours
 Falls like a mantle round my form ;
 And all the stars, like autumn flowers,
 Are banished by the whirling storm.
 The demon-clouds throughout the sky,
 Are dancing in their strange delight,
 While winds unwearied play ; — but I
 Am weary of the night.

*Then rise, sweet maiden mine, arise,
 And dawn upon me with thine eyes.*

II.

The linden, like a lover, stands
 And taps against thy window pane ; —
 The willow with its slender hands,
 Is harping on the silver rain.

I've watched thy gleaming taper die,
And hope departed with the light —
The winds unwearied play ; — but I
Am weary of the night.

*Then rise, sweet maiden mine, arise,
And dawn upon me with thine eyes.*

III.

The gentle morning comes apace,
And smiling bids the night depart ;
Rise, maiden, with thy orient face,
And smile the shadow from my heart !
The clouds of night affrighted fly —
Yet darkness seals my longing sight —
All nature gladly sings — while I
Am weary of the night.

*Then rise, sweet maiden mine, arise,
And dawn upon me with thine eyes.*

THE MAID OF THE MORNING.



I HAVE loved a gentle maiden
Long and well ;
Of her many radiant beauties
Who may tell ?

Freely to the winds she giveth
Golden hair ;
One rare, burning jewel gilds her
Forehead fair.

And her silky robes of azure
Glisten bright —
Sometimes on her breast a crescent
Shineth white.

Early at my open casement

She is beaming,

Jealous lest that of some other

I am dreaming.

Smiling unto me she cometh,

Stealing slow ;

On my cheek and brow I feel her

Tresses glow.

Deep into my eye she peereth

To the brain,

And of pleasant golden visions

Wakes a train.

When to mine the maiden closely

Rests her cheek,

Thus in whispering words I hear her

Chiding speak —

“ Wherefore, oh thou dreamy poet,

Sleep'st thou still ?

Thou may'st hear the big wheel turning

At the mill —

“ Hear the pretty milk-maid singing
With her pail ;
And from yonder barn the thunder
Of the flail.

“ Then why flows thy life-stream idle
’Neath the sun ?
Is their nothing in thy store-house
To be done ?

“ Start the wheel, thou drowsy miller,
Start in haste !
Ere thy life’s uncertain river
Runs to waste.

“ Like the threshers, be thy labor
Hard and long ;
Like the milk-maid let thy glad heart
Gush in song.”

Thus the maiden gently chides me,
Whilst her eyes
Speak a language all too tender
For disguise.

Therefore flows my love unto her

Like a river,

And I'll praise the Maid of Morning

Now and ever.

THE WINDY NIGHT.



ALow and aloof,
Over the roof,
How the midnight tempests howl!
With a dreary voice, like the dismal tune
Of wolves that bay at the desert moon ; —
Or whistle and shriek
Through limbs that creak,
“ Tu — who ! tu — whit ! ”
They cry and flit,
“ Tu — whit ! — tu who ! ” like the solemn owl !

ALow and aloof,
Over the roof,
Sweep the moaning winds amain,
And wildly dash
The elm and ash,
Clattering on the window sash !

With a clatter and patter,
Like hail and rain,
That well nigh shatter
The dusky pane !

Aloof and aloof,
Over the roof,
How the tempests swell and roar !
Though no foot is astir,
Though the cat and the cur
Lie dozing along the kitchen floor,
There are feet of air
On every stair !
Through every hall —
Through each gusty door,
There's a jostle and bustle,
With a silken rustle,
Like the meeting of guests at a festival !

Aloof and aloof,
Over the roof,
How the stormy tempests swell !

And make the vane
On the spire complain —
They heave at the steeple with might and main ;
And burst and sweep
Into the belfry, on the bell !
They smite it so hard, and they smite it so well,
That the sexton tosses his arms in sleep,
And dreams he is ringing a funeral knell !

“MOURN NOT, SAD POET.”



MOURN not, sad poet, but right gladly sing,
So shall thy fortune be not wholly drear ;
Pour forth thy spirit like a rock-bound spring,
Which o'er its barriers sings more sweetly clear.
Pour forth thy gladness in a louder shower,
Because thou 'rt in a rocky desert placed,
That pilgrims, feeling thy refreshing power,
Shall speak thy praises through their life-wide waste.
Pour forth thy freshness, and though far and wide
No blossoms wave to cheer the barren ground,
Earth's countless flowers, in rarest colors dyed
With sweetest moss, shall compass thee around.
Then sing in gladness, and thy constant lay
Shall wear Misfortune's hardest rocks away !

THE WATER.



'THE water ! the water ! The dark cloud upsprings,
And, eagle-like, scatters the spray from its wings !
'The water ! the water ! Where pastures are green,
Where forest trees grow with sweet flowers between ;
Where sitteth the mountain, so sullen and proud,
And, sultan-like, wears for its turban the cloud ;
Where springeth a shrub — where a leaflet is seen,
Wherever is beauty, the water hath been.
Throughout the dark winter you hear it rejoice,
As it glideth away with its ice-muffled voice ;
Where late on the hill-side the loud torrent flowed,
It stands in the night like a ghost by the road !

But bounding adown in the light of the sun,
With maniac laughter the water shall run ;
Away, and away, telling loud with delight,
The pranks that it played through the long winter night !
But dreadful the place where the water is not —
The camel athirst faints away on the spot —
The pilgrim starts up, with his blood-bursting eyes,
To follow the counterfeit lake as it flies !
O'er terrible sands he pursueth it far,
Then sink, as it fades like a meteor star !
Like Hagar, he sinks in his burning distress —
Send thy angel, oh, God, to the wilderness !

A MORNING, BUT NO SUN.



THE morning comes, but brings no sun ;
The sky with storm is overrun ;
And here I sit in my room alone,
And feel, as I hear the tempest moan,
Like one who hath lost the last and best,
The dearest dweller from his breast !
For every pleasant sight and sound,
The sorrows of the sky have drowned ;
The bell within the neighboring tower,
Falls blurred and distant through the shower ;
Look where I will, hear what I may,
All, all the world seems far away !
The dreary shutters creak and swing,
The windy willows sway and fling

A double portion of the rain
Over the weeping window pane.
But I, with gusty sorrow swayed,
Sit hidden here, like one afraid,
And would not on another throw
One drop of all this weight of woe !

TO WORDSWORTH.



THY rise was as the morning, glorious, bright !
And error vanished like the affrighted dark ; —
While many a soul, as the aspiring lark,
Waked by thy dawn, soared singing to the light,
Drowning in gladdest song the earth's despite !
And beauty blossomed in all lowly nooks —
Love, like a river made of nameless brooks,
Grew and exulted in thy wakening sight !
All nature hailed thee as a risen sun ;
Nor will thy setting blur her thankful eyes !
While earth remains thy day shall not be done,
Nor cloud dispread to blot thy matchless skies !
When Death's command, like Joshua's shall arise,
Thou 'lt stand as stood the sun of Gibeon !

THE SUMMER SHOWER.



BEFORE the stout harvesters falleth the grain,
As when the strong storm-wind is reaping the plain ;
And loiters the boy in the briery lane ;
But yonder aslant comes the silvery rain,
Like a long line of spears brightly burnished and tall.

Adown the white highway, like cavalry fleet,
It dashes the dust with its numberless feet.
Like a murmurless school, in their leafy retreat,
The wild birds sit listening the drops round them beat ;
And the boy crouches close to the blackberry wall.

The swallows alone take the storm on their wing,
And, taunting the tree-sheltered laborers, sing.
Like pebbles the rain breaks the face of the spring,
While a bubble darts up from each widening ring ;
And the boy, in dismay, hears the loud shower fall.

But soon are the harvesters tossing the sheaves ;
The robin darts out from its bower of leaves ;
The wren peereth forth from the moss-covered eaves ;
And the rain-spattered urchin now gladly perceives
That the beautiful bow bendeth over them all.



LABOR.



“LABOR, labor!” sounds the anvil
“Labor, labor, until death!”
And the file, with voice discordant,
“Labor, endless labor!” saith.
While the bellows to the embers,
Speaks of labor in each breath.

“Labor, labor!” in the harvest,
Saith the whetting of the scythe,
And the mill-wheel tells of labor
Under waters falling blithe;
“Labor, labor!” groan the millstones,
To the bands that whirl and writhe!

And the woodman tells of labor,
In his echo-waking blows ;
In the forest, in the cabin,
'T is the dearest word he knows !
“ Labor, labor ! ” saith the spirit,
And with labor comes repose.

“ Labor ! ” saith the loaded wagon,
Moving towards the distant mart.
“ Labor ! ” groans the heavy steamer,
As she cleaves the waves apart.
Beating like that iron engine,
“ Labor, labor ! ” cries the heart !

Yes, the heart of man cries “ labor ! ”
While it labors in the breast.
Hear the Ancient and Eternal,
In the Word which He hath blest,
Saying, “ Six days shalt thou labor,
On the seventh thou shalt rest ! ”

Then how beautiful at evening,
When the toilsome week is done,
To behold the blacksmith's embers
Fade together with the sun ;
And to think the doors of labor
Are all closing up like one !

SUNLIGHT ON THE THRESHOLD.



DEAR Mary, I remember yet

The day when first we rode together,
Through groves where grew the violet,
For it was in the Maying weather.

And I remember how the woods

Were thrilled with love's delightful chorus ;
How in the scented air the buds,
Like our young hearts, were swelling o'er us.

The little birds, in tuneful play,

Along the fence before us fluttered ;
The robin hopped across the way,
Then turned to hear the words we uttered !

We stopped beside the willow-brook,
That trickled through its bed of rushes ;
While timidly the reins you took,
I gathered blooms from brier bushes ;

And one I placed, with fingers meek,
Within your little airy bonnet ;
But then I looked and saw your cheek —
Another rose was blooming on it !

Some miles beyond the village lay,
Where pleasures were in wait to wreath us ;
While swiftly flew the hours away,
As swiftly flew the road beneath us.

How gladly we beheld arise,
Across the hill, the village steeple !
Then met the urchin's wondering eyes,
And gaze of window-peering people !

The dusty coach that brought the mail,
Before the office door was standing ;
Beyond, the blacksmith, gray and hale,
With burning tire the wheel was banding.

We passed some fruit-trees — after these
A bedded garden lying sunward ;
Then saw, beneath three aged trees,
The parsonage a little onward.

A modest building, somewhat gray,
Escaped from time, from storm, disaster ;
The very threshold worn away
With feet of those who 'd sought the pastor.

And standing on the threshold there,
We saw a child of angel lightness,
Her soul-lit face — her form of air,
Outshone the sunlight with their brightness !

As then she stood I see her now —
In years perchance a half a dozen —
And, Mary, you remember how
She ran to you and called you “ cousin ? ”

As then, I see her slender size,
Her flowing locks upon her shoulder —
A six years' loss to Paradise,
And ne'er on earth the child grew older !

Three times the flowers have dropped away,
Three winters glided gaily o'er us,
Since here upon that morn in May
The little maiden stood before us.

These are the elms, and this the door,
With trailing woodbine overshadowed ;
But from the step, forevermore,
The sunlight of that child has faded !

THE RAINY DAY.



OVER the hills and over the plains,
Sweep the equinoctial rains,
 Smiting the river, beating the bay,
 Till every wave,
 Like a coward slave,
Sinks in a sullen hush away !
A very tyrant is the rain ;
He throweth around his chilly chain,
He barreth the rich and he barreth the poor,
While his sentinels pace at every door !
 But what care I
 For the frowning sky,
Or the rain who forgeth his chain so cold !
 For I can dream,
 And, dreaming deem
His fetters are only as fetters of gold !

Oh, sweet to me is the autumn weather,
When the rain and the leaves come down together ;
When twilight through the day descends ;

When rare old books

From shadowy nooks

Look out like old familiar friends !

'Tis then I weave my idle rhyme

While the noisy rain without beats time.

For never more lovely looked river and plain,

Than now, when they gleam through the misty pane !

Then what care I

For the frowning sky,

Or the rain who forgeth his chain so cold ;

For I can dream,

And, dreaming, deem

His fetters are only as fetters of gold !

THE SWISS STREET SINGER.



THROW up the glassy casement wide,
And fling the heavy blinds aside,
To let the sunshine and the tide
Of music through the chamber glide.
Oh, list ! it is a maiden young,
Who singeth in a foreign tongue ;
She poureth songs in strangest guise,
In words translated by her eyes.

*Come, youth and childhood, form the ring,
And, maidens, from the window lean,
To bid the exile Switzer sing,
And strike the trembling tambourine !*

The glistening azure in her eye
Hath something of her native sky ;
The music of the rill and breeze
Are mingled in her melodies ;
And in her form's tall graceful lines
There's something of the mountain pines ;
And, oh, believe her soul may glow
As purely as the Alpine snow.
*Come, youth and childhood, form the ring,
And, maidens, from the window lean,
To bid the exile Switzer sing,
And strike the trembling tambourine !*

Oh, gaze not on her scornfully,
For, gentle lady, like to thee,
That wandering maiden well may be
Acquaint with pain and misery, —
And sad remembrance prompts the lay
That telleth of the far away ;
While wildly in her music swell
The glory, name, and land of Tell !

*Then, youth and childhood, form the ring,
And, maidens, from the window lean,
To bid the exile Switzer sing,
And strike the trembling tambourine !*

THE DEPARTURE.



ALL around me glows the harvest
As I drop below the town,
And the pleasant song of workmen
On the breeze is floating down.

Far away the slender brooklet
Gleams upon the yellow plain,
Like a newly sharpened sickle
Dropped amid the golden grain.

By the town, and through the valleys,
Sweeps the flashing river fast,
Like a herald to the future,
With a summons from the past.

Now my soul hath caught the music
Of the pleasant harvest strain ;
And the stream of gladness flashes,
Like the brooklet, in my brain.

And responsive to the river,
How my spirit sweeps along,
As it goes to meet the future,
With a purpose fixed and strong.

THE TWINS.



FROM a beautiful lake in the mountain

Two rivulets came down,

Prattling awhile to the violets

'Mid shadows green and brown.

O'er beds of golden lustre,

Around by rock and tree,

They sang the same tune with their silvery tongues,

And clapped their hands in glee.

O'er rocks with mosses mantled,

They eddied and whirled like a waltzing pair,

Till, hand in hand, with laughter and leap

They mingled their misty hair.

Over the self-same ledges,
Singing the self-same tune,
They passed from April to breezy May,
Toward the fields of June.

They whirled and danced and dallied,
And through the meadows slid,
Till under the same thick grass and flowers
Their further course was hid !

I saw two beautiful children,
Of one fair mother born,
Like two young clouds of golden hue
That smile on the breast of morn.

The same in age and beauty,
The same in voice and size,
The same bright hair upon their necks,
The same shade in their eyes !

Singing the same song ever
In the self-same silvery tune,
They passed from April into May,
Toward the fields of June !

They whirled and danced and dallied

The beautiful vales amid,

Till under the same thick leaves and flowers

Their future course was hid !

EVENING.



WHILE the fading day, yet florid,
Gilds the steeples of the town,
With a star upon her forehead
Comes the gentle evening down ;
And a gray and gause-like mantle
Melts around her robes of brown.

Sacred rest from her is given,
Rest and love and joy complete ;
All the sweetest birds of heaven
Singing drop down at her feet ;
And the happy rustic maidens
The sweet songs of peace repeat.

Now the farmer 'mid his cattle
 Stands the conscious lord of all ;
And the horse, like one from battle,
 Hears the heavy harness fall,
Turning with a neigh of pleasure,
 Well contented, to his stall.

Not alone o'er hills and valleys
 Falls the star-light of her mien ;
But in streets and dismal alleys
 Is her holy presence seen,
By the rich and by the beggar,
 And the crowd who walk between.

And the bard, though worn and weary,
 She renews with strange delight,
Spreading round his walls, late dreary,
 Fancies beautiful and bright,
Ere comes down, like Cleopatra,
 The rare jewelled queen of Night.

Though to some she brings no gladness, —
While she tells of fearful things ;
What though misery and madness
Still inflict their savage stings ;
Yet thrice blessed be the Evening,
That some peace to earth she brings.

AUTUMN'S SIGHING.



AUTUMN's sighing,
Moaning, dying ;
Clouds are flying
 On like steeds ;
While their shadows
O'er the meadows,
Walk like widows
 Decked in weeds.

Red leaves trailing,
Fall unfailing,
Dropping, sailing
 From the wood,
That, unpliant,
Stands defiant,
Like a giant
 Dropping blood.

Winds are swelling
Round our dwelling,
All day telling
 Us their wo,
And at vesper
Frosts grow crisper,
As they whisper
 Of the snow.

From th' unseen land
Frozen inland,
Down from Greenland
 Winter glides,
Shedding lightness,
Like the brightness
When moon-whiteness
 Fills the tides.

Now bright pleasure's
Sparkling measures
With rare treasures
 Overflow !

With this gladness
Comes what sadness !
Oh, what madness !
Oh, what wo !

Even merit
May inherit
Some bare garret,
Or the ground ;
Or, a worse ill,
Beg a morsel,
At some door sill,
Like a hound !

Storms are trailing,
Winds are wailing,
Howling, railing
At each door.
'Midst this trailing,
Howling, railing,
List the wailing
Of the poor !

THE LAND OF OBLIVION.



A dusky king, in dusky shadows blent,
Morosely reigns in gloomy realms afar;
Above him hangs an ebon firmament,
With here and there a star.

A sullen sea casts down its laden waves
Along the dull and fast encroaching strand,
Upheaving lengthened ridges on the graves
Of nations, with the sand.

With knitted brows the king sits gazing through
The melancholy night, that thickly blears
Far off the endless phantom retinue
Of fast advancing years.

The flaming sword that waved o'er Eden's gate
Illumes the farthest verge of his retreat ;
But here the boundary of his dark estate
Lies even at our feet.

A boundary which we may not cross and live ;
A shore fast crumbling in the wave that rides
Impetuous in our path, and soon must give
The body to the tides.

And now, when dark December's gathering storm
With heavy wing o'ershadows many a heart,
Beside us the old year with white-robed form
Stands waiting to depart.

Weighed down as with a ponderous tale of woe,
How dim his eyes, how wan his cheeks appear !
Like Denmark's spectre king, with motion slow
He beckons the young year.

INDIAN SUMMER.



It is the season when the light of dreams
Around the year in golden glory lies ; —
The heavens are mistier than a maiden's eyes,
Whose soul with love's perpetual splendor teems.
Like hidden poets lie the hazy streams,
O'er veiled with mysteries of their own romance,
While scarce a breath disturbs their drowsy trance.
The golden leaf which down the soft air gleams,
Glides, wavers, falls and skims the unruffled lake.
Here the frail maples and the faithful firs
By twisted vines are wed. The russet brake
Skirts the low pool ; and starred with open burs
The chestnut stands—But when the north-wind stirs,
How, like an armed host, the summoned scene shall
wake !

THE DISTANT MART.



THE day is shut : — November's night,
On Newark's long and rolling height
 Falls suddenly and soon ; —
At once the myriad stars disclose ;
And in the east a glory glows,
Like that the red horizon shows
 Above the moon !

But o'er the western mountain tops
The moon, in new-born beauty, drops
 Her pale and slender ring ; —
Still, like a phantom rising red
O'er haunted valleys of the dead,
I see the distant east dispread
 Its fiery wing !

I know by thoughts, which, like the skies,
Grow darker as they slowly rise

Above my burning heart,
It is the light the peasant views,
Through nightly falling frosts and dews,
While Fancy paints in brighter hues
The distant mart.

Through shadowy hills and meadows brown,
The calm Passaic reaches down

Where the broad waters lie ; —
From hill-side homes what visions teem !
The fruitless hope — ambitious dream,
Go freighted downward with the stream,
And yonder die !

And youths and maids, with strange desires,
O'er quiet homes and village spires

Behold the radiance grow ;
They see the lighted casements fine —
The crowded halls of splendor shine —
The gleaming jewels and the wine,
But not the woe !

Take from yon flaunting flame the ray
Which glows on heads untimely gray,
On blasted heart and brain !

From rooms of death the watchers' lamp,
From homes of toil, from hovels damp,
And dens where Shame and Crime encamp
With Want and Pain !

From vain bazaars, from gilded halls,
Where every misnamed pleasure palls,
Remove the chandeliers ;
Then mark the scanty, scattered rays !
And think amid that dwindled blaze
How few shall walk their happy ways,
And shed no tears !

But now, when fade the fevered gleams,
Some trouble melts away to dreams,
Some pain to sweet repose !
And as the midnight shadows sweep,
Life's noisy torrent drops to sleep,
Its unseen current, dark and deep,
In silence flows !

THE SCULPTOR'S LAST HOUR.

ALL, IN THEIR LIFE-TIME, CARVE THEIR OWN SOUL'S STATUE.



THE middle chimes of night were dead ;
The Sculptor pressed his sleepless bed ; —
His silver locks were long and thin,
His eyes and cheeks were fallen in !
And, like the leaf on Autumn's limb,
The fluttering life still clung to him !

While gazing on the shadowy wall,
He heard the muffled knocker fall ;
But, e'er an answering foot could stir,
Passed in the midnight messenger !
Around his shining shoulders rolled
The long and gleaming locks of gold ;
The radiance of his features fell
In Beauty's light unspeakable !

And, like the matin song of birds,
Swelled the sweet music of his words !
“ Arise ! It is your Monarch's will,
Ere sounds from the imperial hill
The warder's trumpet-blast,
The palace-portal must be passed ;
And 't is the hour before the last !
Arise ! and be the veil withdrawn,
And let the long-wrought statue dawn !
For it must be as morning, bright !
The stars amid the fields of night
Must fade before its purer light !
The unblemished face, the spotless limb,
Must shine among the seraphim,
Faultless in form, in nothing dim,
Or else it may not come to Him ! ”

The sculptor rose with sinking heart,
And slowly passed the veil apart ;
And stood, with downcast look entranced,
The while the messenger advanced,
And thought he heard, yet knew not why,
His hopes, like boding birds, go by !

And felt his heart weigh ceaselessly
Down, like the friendless dead at sea !
Oh, for one breath athwart the air
To break the stillness of despair !
Oh, for one word, though it were sent
The seal of blackest banishment !
Welcome alike, though it were given
From sulphurous shades, or vales of heaven !

Now on the darkness swelled a sigh —
The sculptor raised his languid eye
And saw the radiant stranger stand,
Hiding his sorrow with his hand !
His breast a billowy motion kept,
And ever, with its fall and rise,
The stillness of the air was swept
With a long wave of sighs !
Then grew the old man's asking eyes
Still larger with their blank surprise,
With wonder why he wept !
And while his eyes and wonder grew —
Came, with the tears which gushed anew,

The music of the stranger's tongue ;
But broken, like a swollen rill,
That heaves along its native hill,
Sobbing where late it sung !
“ Is this the statue, fair and white,
A long, laborious life hath wrought ?
And which our generous Prince hath bought ?
Is this, (so soulless, soiled, and dull,)
To pass the gates of light
And stand among the beautiful ?
The lines which seam the front and cheek
Too well unholy lusts bespeak !
The brow by Anger's hand is weighed,
And Malice there his scar hath made ;
Here Scorn hath set her seal secure,
And curled the lip against the poor !
And Hate hath fixed the steady glance
Which Jealousy hath turned askance !
While Thoughts, of these dark parents born,
Innumerable, from night till morn,
And morn till night, have wrought their will,
Like storms upon a barren hill !



Old man, what though thy locks be gray,
And Life's last hour is on its way,—
What though thy limbs with palsy quake,
The hands, like Autumn branches, shake !
Ere from your rampart high and round
The watchful warder's blast shall sound,
Let this be changed while yet it may !
Your Monarch brooks no vain delay ! ”
The stranger spake and turned away.

A moment stood the aged man
With lips apart and look aghast,
Still gazing where the stranger passed !
And now a shudder o'er him ran
As chill November's breezes sweep
Across the dying meadow grass !
His tongue was dry, he could not speak !
His eyes were like the heated glass !
But, when the tears began to creep
Adown the channels of his cheek, —
A long and shadowy train,
Born of his sorrowing brain,

With shining feet and noiseless tread,
By dewy-eyed Repentance led,
 Around the statue pressed !
With eager hand and swelling breast,
Hope, jubilant, the chisel seized
 And heavenward turned the eye !
Forgiveness, radiant and pleased,
The ridges of the brow released ;
 While, with a tear and sigh,
Sweet Charity the scorn effaced ;
 And Mercy, mild and fair,
Upon the lips her chisel placed,
 And left her signet there !
And Love, the earliest born of heaven,
 O'er all the features glowing ran !
While Peace, the best and latest given,
 Finished what Hope began !

One minute now before the last,
 The stately stranger came ;
One smile upon the statue cast,
Then to the fainting sculptor passed,

And spake his errand and his name !
And on the old man's latest breath
Swelled a sweet whisper, "Welcome, Death !"
Afar from the imperial height
Sounded the warder's horn !
Upward, by singing angels borne,
The statue passed the gates of light,
Outshining all the stars of night,
And fairer than the morn.

A DIRGE FOR A DEAD BIRD.

“ A thing of beauty is a joy forever.” — *Keats*.

THE cage hangs at the window,
There 's the sunshine on the sill ;
But where 's the form and where 's the voice
That ne'er till now were still ?

The sweet voice hath departed
From its feathery home of gold,
The little form of yellow dust
Lies motionless and cold !

Oh, where amid the azure
Hath thy sweet spirit fled ?
I hold my breath and think I hear
Its music overhead.

Death has not hushed thy spirit,
Its joy shall vanish never ;
The slightest thrill of pleasure born
Lives on and lives forever !

Throughout the gloomy winter
Thy soul shed joy in ours,
As it told us of the summer-time
Amid the land of flowers.

But now thy songs are silent,
Except what memory brings ;
For thou hast folded death within
The glory of thy wings !

And here thy resting place shall be
Beneath the garden bower ;
A bush shall be thy monument,
Thy epitaph a flower !

BELLS.



ATHWART the quiet morning air
The bells toll out their solemn chime,
Whose sounds come laden as they were
Dropt from the lips of Time ;

Or pilgrim-like, they gently cast
Aside the sad heart's noiseless door,
And enter, weary from the past,
And eloquent in lore.

They tell me of the days of old,
Of warfare — death — the marriage vow ;
They speak of whatsoe'er has held
The peasant from the plough.

The sound recalls the castled Rhine,
Its convent-crag, and sadly tells
Of those two lovers doomed to pine
Beneath stern Drachenfels !

Of cloudy Marksburg, old and brave ;
And Rheinfels' grey dismantled halls ; —
The Pfalz, whose prisoners heard the wave
Break on their dungeon walls !

It tells the welcome chime that cheers
The marches of the city guard ;
Of sounds the storm-worn traveller hears
'Mid hills of Saint Bernard !

And of the wild alarum dread
Which knelled the invader's sinking fame,
When Moscow's sons, departing, spread
The sacrificial flame !

It brings, as with a magic wand,
That simple chapel and its bell
That show the traveller, Switzerland,
The greatness of thy Tell !

But most the glorious sound reveals
The clangor of the bell which broke
The sky with Declaration peals,
When Liberty awoke !

Anon, when Truth's triumphal car
Shall mount regardless of the Past,
From useless implements of war
A mightier shall be cast !

And worthier far a nation's pride
The toll upon the blessed air,
Which, swelling long and loud and wide,
Shall endless peace declare !

COME THOU, MY BRIDE.



COME thou, like morning, gentle bride,
In thy own glory beautified,
Floweret-cheeked and dewy-eyed.

So, dearest, when thy dawn I mark,
Uprising from the lingering dark,
My soul shall greet thee like the lark.

Come with thy love's exhaustless measure,
Look down and fill my soul with pleasure,
As streams are filled with noon-day azure.

Then, as the spirit-mists arise
To the embraces of the skies,
My love shall greet thine asking eyes.

Or meet me with a milder light ;
Come, like that halo, starry-bright,
Which forever clasps the Night.

Let Fortune frown, or skies be drear,
Do thou but as thyself appear,
A cloudless heaven shall still be here !

A HYMN TO THE NIGHT.



OH Night ! most beautiful, most rare !
Thou giv'st the heavens their holiest hue !
And through the azure fields of air
Bringest down the gentle dew !

Most glorious occupant of heaven,
And fairest of the Earth and sea !
The wonders of the sky are given,
Imperial Night, to thee !

For thou, with breathless lips apart,
Didst stand, in that dim age afar,
And hold upon thy trembling heart
Messiah's herald-star !

In Olivet thou heard'st Him pray,
And wept thy dew in softer light,
And kissed His sacred tears away !
Thrice blessed, loving Night !

And thou didst overweigh with sleep
The watchers at the sepulchre ;
And heard'st the asking Mary weep —
Till Jesus answered her.

For this I love thy hallowed reign !
For more than this thrice blest thou art !
Thou gain'st the unbeliever's brain
By entering at his heart !

Oh Night ! most regal ! most divine !
Thou lift'st the spirit from the dust !
God's best and brightest gifts are thine,
All thine, and it is just !

WINTER.



SAD soul — dear heart, why, why repine ?

The melancholy tale is plain —

The leaves of Spring, the Summer flowers,

Have bloomed and died again !

The sweet, the silver-sandaled Dew,

Which like a maiden fed the flowers,

Hath waxed into the beldame Frost,

And walked amid our bowers !

Some buds there were — sad hearts be still ! —

Which looked awhile unto the sky,

Then breathed but once or twice, to tell

How sweetest things may die !

And some must blast where many bloom ; —

But, blast or bloom, the fruit must fall !

Why sigh for Spring or Summer gems,

Since winter gathers all ?

He gathers all, but chide him not, —

What though his breast and hands are cold,

He folds them close as best he can,

For he is blind and old.

Oh, chide him not ! hear how he groans,

While frozen tears begem his face ; —

Through fields and woods he stumbles on,

The last of all his race.

See how he totters down the road, —

And now he 's at yon cabin door,

And he has summoned from the hearth

The widow old and poor.

He points her to the distant grove, —

He plucks her by the tattered gown ;

And now he leads her through the woods,

And shakes the branches down.

See how he wanders up the hill
Before the morning is astir,
And stoops with trembling hands to wrap
The frozen traveller !

Oh chide him not, the poor old man !
He works some kindness in his rounds !
Nor leave him in the foulest nights
To kennel with the hounds !

But when he 's standing at the gate,
Or at the portal makes a din,
Throw wood upon the crackling fire,
And let the old man in.

And seat him at the chimney side,
And let your looks with love abound ;
Then tell the tale and sing the song,
And let the nuts go round.

Then shall you see his frowns dispelled,
And pleasure smile where all was drear ;
And when his griefs are quite dissolved
The flowers again appear !

Sad soul — dear heart — why, why repine ?

The tale is beautiful and plain —

Surely as Winter taketh all,

The Spring shall bring again !

THE BARDS.



WHEN the sweet day in silence hath departed,
And twilight comes with dewy, downcast eyes,
The glowing spirits of the mighty-hearted
Like stars around me rise. —

Spirits whose voices pour an endless measure,
Exhaustless as the founts of glory are ;
Until my trembling soul, o'erswept with pleasure,
Throbs like a flooded star.

Old Homer's song, in mighty undulations,
Comes surging, ceaseless, up the oblivious main ; —
I hear the rivers from succeeding nations
Go answering down again : —

Hear Virgil's stream in changeful currents strolling,
And Tasso's sweeping round through Palestine ;
And Dante's deep and solemn river rolling
Through groves of midnight pine.

I hear the iron Norseman's numbers ringing
Through frozen Norway, like a herald's horn ;
And like a lark, hear glorious Chaucer singing
Away in England's morn.

In Rhenish halls I hear the pilgrim lover
Weave his wild story to the wailing strings,
Till the young maiden's eyes are brimming over,
Like the sweet cup she brings.

And hear from Scottish hills the souls unquiet,
Pouring in torrents their perpetual lays,
As their impetuous mountain runnels riot
In the long rainy days : —

The world-wide Shakspeare — the imperial Spenser,
Whose shafts of song o'ertop the angels' seats ; —
While delicate, as from a silver censer,
Float the sweet dreams of Keats !

Nor these alone ; for, through the growing present,
Westward the starry path of Poesy lies —
Her glorious spirit, like the evening crescent,
Comes rounding up the skies.

I see the beauty which her light impartest !

I hear the masters of our native song !

The gentle-hearted Allston, poet-artist !

And Dana wild and strong !

And he, whose soul like angel-harps combining

Anthemed the solemn "Voices of the Night" !

I see fair Zophiel's radiant spirit shining,

Pale intellectual light !

And Bryant, in his own broad kingdom mildly

Walking by streams, through woods and summer
fields ;

And iron-handed Whittier, when he wildly

The fiery falchion wields !

These are the Bards who, like our forests, tower,

Firm in their strength as are the mountain trees !

I were content could I but be a flower

Up at the feet of these !





